

THE SEVENTH DAY.

20th March, 1923.

VII. EDUCATION.

The Assembly met at 11-40 A. M. on Tuesday, the 20th March, 1923.

107. Desirability of introducing certain changes in the Education Code and in the educational policy of Government.

Mr. Krishnan Madhavan (Member, Karunagapalli Taluk) after thanking the Government for their policy of appointing Travancoreans in the Education and other Departments, made certain suggestions for the better management of the department. He said that, since the Director of Public Instruction could not ordinarily be an expert in matters educational, it would be desirable to have an expert as Educational Secretary in the Huzur Office. There was no advantage in the Director being a specialist in literature or chemistry, if he was not sufficiently well posted in matters connected with primary and secondary education. At present, the Director had to depend on his office staff or subordinate officers in administrative matters, and the existence of such an officer between the Government and the governed was a severe handicap to the latter in the way of their educational advancement. He next referred to the inspection of English Schools and pointed out that, out of 51 institutions, only 48 had been inspected in 1097, stating at the same time that it was undesirable for the Director to be merely a visiting and not an inspecting officer in respect of His Highness the Maha Raja's College. He suggested that that institution might also be periodically inspected by the Director. He then advocated the appointment of a new class of inspecting officers, under the designation of Sub-Inspectors, since the Assistant Inspectors were, under present arrangements, unable to inspect all vernacular schools.

The Member next referred to the Arts and Training Colleges, the Text Book Committee, Scholarships, the Examination Board and to the need for a University for Travancore. He pointed out that the existing staff of Professors in the college was composed of foreigners, and suggested that, instead of bearing the expenditure involved in the employment of European Professors in the College, Government might, with advantage, train up Travancoreans for the purpose in foreign Universities and recoup the money spent on such training from their salaries after their entertainment in the service. As regards the Training College, he urged the need for appointing a committee to consider its working and organisation. The Text Book Committee and the Examiners' Board for the English School Leaving Certificate Examination should be confined to Headmasters of schools and educational officers respectively. In the matter of scholarships, he complained that the awards usually went to pupils of higher castes. The Member next prayed for the appointment of a committee to consider the question of a University for the State.

He said that the Dewan's recent speech at Changanachery regarding the intentions of Government in the matter of vocational education had caused disappointment and that the unemployment of half-educated youths was a serious problem in the State.

In conclusion, the Member requested that Malayalam short-hand and type-writing should be introduced.

Dewan's reply.—You have traversed the whole field of education, and made a number of criticisms and suggestions. You did not send me a note as to the points you were going to speak upon.

I shall begin by referring to scholarships. You made a statement referring to the policy of the Government with regard to this matter. You said that scholarships are generally given to boys who come from the higher castes. If the depressed classes cannot obtain these scholarships, they have fee concessions which are open to them. In regard to the University, a committee is going to be appointed, and I trust that in a few days more the orders of the Government on this subject will issue.

When you referred to the post of the Director of Public Instruction, you said that it should be occupied by an expert. I do not understand what you mean by that. I cannot conceive of any human being who can be an expert in everything connected with education. It is impossible to find such an all-round man. The Director of Public Instruction is an administrative officer, and administrative efficiency is not obtainable by the employment of experts. You cannot expect an educational expert to be the Educational Secretary to Government. It is not educational experts that are Educational Secretaries in other countries. Take the cases of the Educational Secretaries in the several Provincial Governments in British India and even in the Government of India. What do you find? The Secretaries there are not experts in education; but they are intelligent people, who are expected to deal with questions by a study of the papers coming up before them.

Then, in regard to the inspection of English High Schools, you said that only 48 schools were inspected in 1097. 48 schools were inspected out of 51, and I do not think that there can be much room for complaint on that score. As regards the inspection of colleges, you said that colleges must be subject to the supervision of the Director of Public Instruction. Colleges are subject to the supervision of the University, which periodically sends out commissions to inspect them and report. The Director of Public Instruction only visits them and sees whether they are all right in a general way and makes suggestions to the Principals in regard to any improvements he finds necessary.

In regard to the inspecting officers, you want one more class of such officers to be created. That means more expense. The cry that is heard everywhere is a cry for retrenchment and not a cry for adding to expenditure.

You then complained of Travancoreans not being on the staff of Professors. I believe the present Professors were entertained some years ago when no Travancoreans were available. Now we are appointing Travancoreans, and the Assistants and Tutors now appointed are almost invariably Travancoreans. When, in course of time, they become professors, the staff will consist mostly of Travancoreans.

In regard to the Training College, I do not see any reason for having a committee, as suggested by you. Then you want that the Board of Examiners for the English School Leaving Certificate Examination should be composed only of Headmasters of schools. If we are going to make it a body composed entirely of Headmasters, it will be open to criticism. What we are trying to do is to make these Boards a composite of Headmasters and people who are not Headmasters, so that the different aspects of examinations may be present in the minds of the Board of Examiners. Then you refer to vocational education and you quote a remark I made at Changanachery. What I said at Changanachery was that it was not possible for the Government to add a vocational side to the innumerable Government schools. Government, however, have started technical institutions where people who have already received a certain amount of general education may obtain technical education. That is what the Government have done, and this alone they can at present do. This policy was resolved upon at a conference held two years ago. What I said at Changanachery was that it might be more practicable for private managers to have a vocational side to their schools in view of the small number of schools under a single manager. Apart from other objections to the Government introducing a vocational side in all their schools, the financial objection is an insuperable one. In regard to the Text Book Committee, your criticism is similar in nature to the criticism advanced by you regarding examination boards. There must be a certain amount of outside influence to temper the views of purely educational officers and

teachers. I do not think that a Board of Examiners or a Text Book Committee, composed purely of teachers, is an ideal body.

108. Educational policy of Government, its defects and the means of removing them.

Mr. K. M. Mammen Mappillai (Member, Municipal Council, Tiruvalla) complained that Government were giving a step-motherly treatment to the vernacular. He deprecated the use of English in all correspondence even by subordinate officers, including the officers of the vernacular branch of the Education Department. The gradation list of graduate teachers belonging to the provincial staff required revision. The difference in the pay of English School Leaving Certificate holders in the English and Vernacular schools was a source of genuine hardship. He instanced the case of a graduate teacher in a vernacular girls' school who had put in nearly eleven years' service, but was still getting a pay of only Rs. 22. Munshies, Bhagavatars and sewing mistresses who had put in long service should not be sent away now on the ground that they had failed to pass the newly instituted tests. Grants to teachers in private vernacular schools should be raised and those teachers should be entertained in departmental schools. Panars should be included in the list of communities eligible for fee concessions. Malayalam short-hand and type-writing should be encouraged. Trained F. A. teachers should immediately be given at least two increments in their revised scale of pay. The relations between the Headmaster and his assistants were not cordial in several schools, and with a view to remove that evil, it was necessary that Teachers' Councils should be organised in schools.

Deewan's reply.—The last three matters you mentioned are matters of detail. In regard to the eligibility of Panars for fee concession, it is a matter of detail, and the Director of Public Instruction will enquire and make the necessary recommendation to Government, if the community referred to stands in need of that concession. In regard to Munshies and Bhagavatars passing an examination, I realise the situation. It may be very hard on people with long experience and service to be asked to go out if they do not pass the examination. I shall ask the Director to examine that aspect of the matter and grant exemption from passing the examination to persons who have put in long service and have had adequate experience.

Another matter referred to by you is the one regarding correspondence in English. You say that, at present, correspondence is carried on in English between officers, who should carry on such correspondence in the vernacular. There is no rule which prevents correspondence being carried on in the vernacular, and, so far as I know, it is carried on in the vernacular. I may give the instance of the *proverthikars* with whom correspondence is now carried on only in the vernacular. I do not see the reason why it should not be so in other cases also. Government will issue a circular in regard to this matter. But, let me tell you, it will not be easy to carry on correspondence in the vernacular between the inspecting and the controlling staff, because some of the latter are not expected to be so well conversant with the vernacular; but between the lower officers themselves, correspondence *could* be and *should* be carried on in the vernacular.

The two other matters you spoke about are (1) increase of grants to vernacular schools, and (2) encouragement to teachers and officers of the vernacular section of the Education Department. In regard to the former, let me tell you that, when we raised the grant by 25 per cent. a year or two ago, it cost us one lakh of rupees more. You want the grant of Rs. 7½ a month per teacher to be raised to Rs. 10, i. e., by 33 per cent. It will involve a heavy additional expenditure. While I recognise the hardship that is being experienced by grant-in-aid schools, the matter of raising the grant is one in regard to which, I am sorry to say, Government cannot give any other reply.

As regards want of encouragement to vernacular teachers, that is a criticism very often levelled against the Government. I do not see any rule which prohibits the transfer of efficient people who are employed in the vernacular section to the English section of the Education Department. If teachers employed in vernacular schools possess the qualification needed for teaching in English